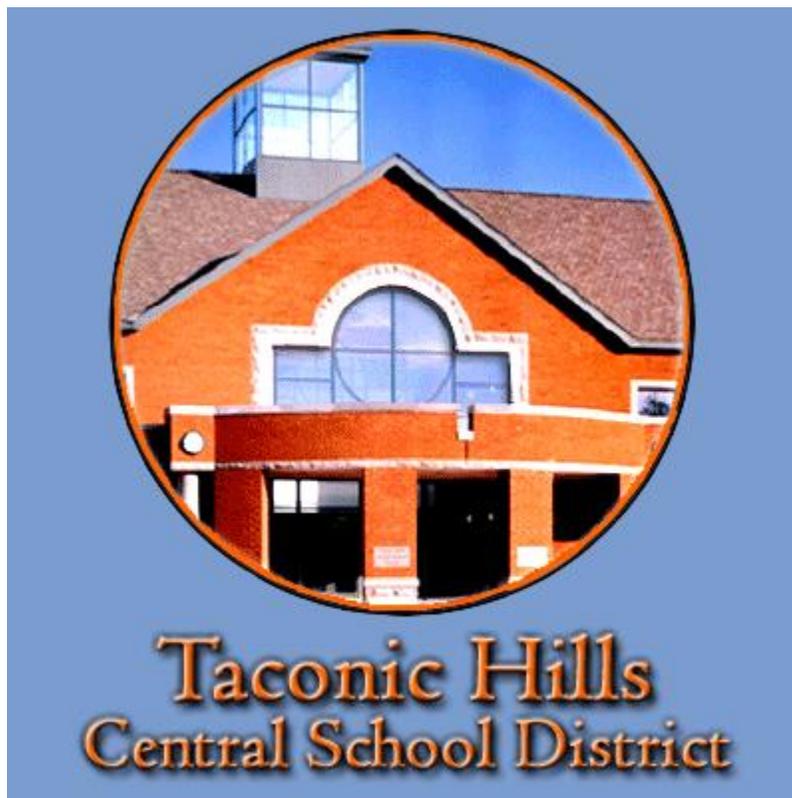


# **Taconic Hills Central School District**

## **District-Wide Safety Plan**



**February 2017**

**73 County Route 11A  
Craryville, New York 12521**

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# **TACONIC HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **District-Wide School Safety Plan**

*Commissioner's Regulation § 155.17 Project 14*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. Districts are required to develop a District-Wide School Safety Plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies.

The District-Wide Plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and technological disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law (Education Law § 2801-a).

This component of Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction/prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the school district and its schools.

The Taconic Hills Central School District supports the SAVE Legislation, and intends to facilitate the planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

New York State Education Law § 2801-a and Education Law Section § 807 were amended on July 1, 2016. Amendments have been made to Commissioner's regulation § 155.17, reflecting the amendments of Education Law § 2801-a and § 807.

### **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **A. Purpose**

The Taconic Hills Central School District-Wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation § 155.17. At the direction of the Taconic Hills Central School District Board of Education, the Superintendent of Taconic Hills Central School District appointed a District-Wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-Wide School Safety Plan.

Taconic Hills Central School District designates Superintendent Neil L. Howard Jr. as its Chief Emergency Officer for the 2016-2017 school year, as required by New York State Education Law § 2801-a.

#### **B. Identification of School Teams**

The Taconic Hills Central School District has appointed a District-Wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the School Board, students, teachers, administrators, parent organizations, school safety personnel, and other school personnel. The members of the team and their positions or affiliations are as follows:

<b>District Wide Safety Team</b>
Superintendent
Business Office
Director of Facilities
Director of Instruction and Staff Development
CSE Chairperson
Supervisor of Transportation
Food Service Coordinator
Athletic Director
Columbia County SRD

<b>Building Level Safety Team</b>
Principal
Assistant Principal
Dean of Students
Counselor
Psychologist
Nurse
Social Worker
Columbia County SRD

<b>Other</b>
New York State Police
Craryville Fire Department
Copake Rescue Squad
Clergy

The District-Wide Safety Team developed the District-Wide School Safety Plan with input from appropriate school staff members, i.e. transportation and food services coordinator.

## C. Concept of Operations

- The District-Wide School Safety Plan is directly linked to the Building-level Emergency Response Plan as a matter of protocol. The activation of the Building-level Emergency Response Plan triggers the notification of the chain of command and the assessment of the activation of the District-Wide Emergency School Safety Plan and District-Wide Response Team.
- The District-Wide School Safety Plan was developed through extensive analysis of the local environment, emergency potential, and available resources. Through training and workshops that included school staff, administration, and local emergency services, the plan has been developed to address the specific needs of the Taconic Hills Central School District and the community.
- In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by the School Emergency Response Team. The Building Principal is responsible for notifying the Superintendent or the highest-ranking person in the chain of command of any necessary Building-level plan activation. This notification shall be accomplished through the use of telephone or the district's radio network.
- Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials shall also be notified.
- County and state resources supplement the school districts emergency action planning in a number of ways:
  - State and local law enforcement provide building reviews and staff training.
  - Local law enforcement and emergency services participate in planning and training exercises and develop strategies for managing building-level emergencies.
  - A protocol exists for the school district to use certain facilities for sheltering during times of emergencies.
  - A protocol exists for the use of county mental health resources during post-incident response.
- The Superintendent of Schools designates himself as the Chief Emergency Officer (CEO) for the 2016-2017 School Year. The CEO is responsible for ensuring staff's understanding of district-wide and building-level safety plans and communications with first responders and law enforcement. The CEO is responsible for annual updates of these safety plans.
- All district staff will be trained on the building-level safety plan by September 15 of each school year or within 30 days of an employee's date of hire. This training will also provide mental health awareness concepts.

## **D. Plan Review and Public Comment**

- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation, Section § 155.17 (e)(3), this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. The School Board shall adopt the District-Wide School Safety Plan only after one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan shall be formally adopted by the Board of Education.
- Full copies of the District-Wide School Safety Plan and any amendments shall be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption.
- This plan shall be reviewed periodically during the year and maintained by the District-Wide School Safety Team. The required annual review shall be completed on or as near to July 1 of each year after its adoption by the Board of Education.

## **RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

### **A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies**

#### **Program Initiatives**

The district has developed a number of programs and activities to aid in risk reduction. These initiatives are run at different age groups within the district.

- Annual review and adoption of Code of Conduct for students.
- Adoption of a school dress code.
- Implementation of conflict resolution programs in each of the schools.
- Implementation of character based education K-12.
- Columbia County Tips Line where students and community members can report anonymous concerns of violence.
- Implementation of multicultural educational programs.
- Law related education curricula which focuses on the protection of human rights and model and civil society.
- Development of student counseling programs and adult facilitated peer support groups.
- School/community support and coordination of family/home support programs offered at the school family resource centers.
- Parenting educational programs.
- Bullying prevention assemblies.
- Gang activity awareness training.
- REACH sexual abuse crisis counseling program.
- Anger management training.
- Student-to-Student and Faculty-to-Student mentoring programs.
- DARE programming.
- High School SADD program (Students Against Destructive Decision-Making).
- Peer mediation grades 4-8.
- STARS program (Students Talking About Responsible Sex).
- Child abuse prevention training.
- Parent Connection center.
- Internet Safety training by the New York State Police.
- Sexual Harassment training.
- The school district is developing a multi-agency mental health response plan.

## **Facilities Initiatives**

The district has attempted to enhance the security of its facilities through a number of initiatives, including the following:

- The school has developed a visitor sign-in procedure and requires the use of visitor ID badges.
- The district uses an employee identification badge system.
- The school has developed a single point of access for visitors at each building, with dual sets of locked doors and security windows for required identification at each point of entrance.
- The district has installed surveillance equipment on school buses and in each building.
- Enhanced district electronic communication systems (see Building-level plan for detail).
- Programmed electronic lighting system.
- Support staff hallway monitoring.

## **Training**

- All school safety personnel shall be provided with the following training:
  - De-escalation Restraint and Removal Training
  - Violence Prevention Training
  - Child Neglect/Abuse
  - Bomb Threat Training
  - Required Evacuation Drills
  - Bus Driver Anti-terrorism Training
  - Security Drills
  - Periodically, additional safe schools workshops have been held, providing additional training in student behavior management, character education, and school building safety.
  - NIIMS/ICS Training
- All employees shall receive training on classroom building emergency response procedures annually, and students shall participate in multi-hazard school safety training on an annual planning including bus emergency and evacuation drills.

## **Drills, and Exercises**

- The district shall conduct drills and other exercises to test and evaluate the effectiveness of the district emergency response plan. Each building principal will forward a schedule of planned emergency drills and fire drills to the Superintendent by September 1 of each school year. A minimum of eight (8) fire drills and four (4) lockdown drills are required annually. Each principal will be required to complete a minimum number of emergency drills as follows:
  - Eight (8) between September 1 and December 31
  - Four (4) between December 31 and summer recess

Any combination of fire and lockdown drills is allowed to meet each requirement.

Pursuant to Education Law § 807, two fire drills must be held during summer school in buildings where summer school is conducted. One of the two must be held during the first week of summer school.

Each school building conducts fire drills throughout the course of the year in compliance with the SED schedule for the purpose of familiarizing staff and students with emergency procedures.

In addition, the district will also conduct the annual early go home drill to test evacuation and sheltering procedures.

- The district shall conduct tabletop exercises with the building-level safety teams to test the components of the emergency response plan. The narratives, sequence of events and messaging for each exercise shall be developed by select members of the District-Wide Safety Team, Emergency Management consultants and local emergency services. The suggestions and necessary enhancements of the Building-level plan noted during the evaluation shall be documented and provided to the Building-level Safety Team and District-Wide Safety Team for further evaluation.
- Topics for training will include general security and safety measures, intervention strategies with difficult or challenging students, building security awareness, and reporting requirements and procedures.

In the execution of their duties faculty, aides and monitors shall have responsibility for:

- Monitoring halls, lavatories, locker rooms, locker bays and similar areas, assuring orderly passage of students and pre-emptive intervention in potentially disruptive situations.
- Observation of the general property, including the immediate outside area/perimeter of the building(s), with an obligation to report suspicious activity to district or building administration.
- Overseeing study halls, cafeterias, or other areas of student assemblage with the goal of assisting to maintain an orderly, safe environment.

### **School Safety Personnel**

School safety personnel have a critical role in violence prevention. The following represents a description of the responsibilities of school safety personnel in the district:

The building principal or his/her designee shall serve as the School Safety Representative for the school building. The responsibilities of the School Safety Representative are as follows:

- Monitor hallways, entranceways, exits and outside grounds during school hours for unusual occurrences or unauthorized visitors.
- Act as building liaison in communicating building level safety issues or concerns.
  - Represent the building on the District-Wide Health and Safety Committee.
  - Serve on building level School Building Response Team.
  - Attend school safety meetings and be a resource on school safety and security issues for building staff.
  - Develop plans and strategies for building security, crime and violence prevention, safety planning and staff training.
  - Participate in school incident investigations.

- Respond to all school emergencies as part of the building's Emergency Response Plan.
- Coordinate annual school safety multi-hazard training for students and staff. Multi-hazard training shall include crisis intervention, emergency response and management.
- Staff and students shall receive annual training and drill practice on protocols for bomb threats, evacuation, sheltering, lock-down, relocate to hallway, fire emergency, bus drills and appropriate violence prevention strategies.
- Designate procedure for informing substitute teaching and non-teaching staff of school safety protocols.
- o Comply and encourage compliance with all school safety and security policies and procedures established by the Board of Education.
- o Attend professional development activities on school safety and violence prevention.

All school safety personnel shall be provided with training on violence prevention and school safety. All training courses shall receive prior approval from the Superintendent.

### **Hiring and Screening of School Personnel**

The following hiring and screening practices are followed for the hiring of all personnel:

#### Fingerprinting and Criminal Background Checks

For all employees hired by the school district, the district completes a fingerprinting and criminal background check prior to appointment. Employees include: any person receiving compensation for work from the school district; any employee of a contracted service provider involved in direct student contact; any worker assigned to a school under a public assistance employment program (includes part-time employees and substitutes).

#### Reference Checks

References are thoroughly checked prior to extending an employment offer.

- o Reference check forms are used for instructional, non-instructional and transportation personnel.
- o Reference checks are completed and reviewed by both the hiring supervisor and the administrator in charge of the program area.
- o Prior to making a job offer to a prospective employee, the following mandatory questions are asked during reference checks with immediate and/or past supervisors:
  - Do you have knowledge of any violations of safety or security by (prospective employee) related to students, staff or others?
  - Why did (prospective employee) leave your employment? Or, Do you know why (prospective employee) is leaving your employment?
  - Would you rehire (prospective employee)? If no, why not?

### **B. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors**

The district has implemented policies and procedures related to the early detection of potentially violent behaviors. Each building principal is responsible for the dissemination of informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors to staff and parents each school year. (Appendix 4). In addition, employees shall receive training on the districts Code-of-Conduct and awareness training on violent behaviors, to be conducted or coordinated by the building principal.

### C. Hazard Identification

The following sites have the potential for internal or external emergency situations:

- Taconic Hills Jr./Sr. High School
- Taconic Hills Elementary School
- Transportation Building

The buildings and grounds associated with each of these facilities have the potential for a district or building-level emergency or incident.

The following elements that are proximate to the Taconic Hills Central School District have been identified as having a potential for presenting emergencies that could affect the district:

- Commercial traffic on Route 23
- Area dams and reservoirs

### RESPONSE

#### A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communications)

- In cases of a serious violent incident the district would use the procedure listed below to meet the requirements for notification and activation. A serious violent incident is an incident of violent criminal conduct that is or appears to be, life threatening and warrants the evacuation of students and staff because of an imminent threat to their safety or health, including but not limited to; the use or threatened use of a firearm, explosive, bomb, incendiary device, chemical, or biological weapon, knife or other dangerous instrument capable of causing death or serious injury; riot; hostage-taking or kidnapping.
  - Communications systems are:

#### Internal

Teachers and building staff	Public address system
Students	Public address system and verbally from supervising teachers
Superintendent of Schools	Phone by principal's secretary
Buildings and Grounds	Phone or radio by principal's secretary
Board of Education	Phone or E-mail

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

In a school emergency, your cooperation and understanding of the situation are essential. Throughout each school's safety plan, there are calm, orderly procedures that will help all students. School officials need your support in their efforts to keep everyone safe. For the safety of your child and all students, it is critically important that you:

1. Remain as calm as possible.
2. **DO NOT attempt to go to the school.** Access routes and streets need to be clear for emergency vehicles. Traffic congestion will make emergency response much more difficult for police, ambulances, and fire departments to get to the school to deal with the emergency quickly. **This is an issue of safety.**
3. **Remain at home or at work** to make it easier for officials to contact you, if necessary. If the school sends your child home on the bus, it is vitally important that you be there to receive your child.
4. **DO NOT call your child on his/her cell phone.** If numerous people are using cell phones at one location, it will jam the airways, which will overload the system and could prevent emergency and school officials from using their cell phones. This would seriously hinder efforts to help students.
5. **DO NOT call your child's school building** as telephone lines will need to remain open to deal with the emergency. If the phone system is overloaded, it will hinder efforts to help students and to provide information.
6. Listen to the local TV and radio stations for information.

**In an emergency, school officials will need your help.  
The best thing you can do is to follow the above suggestions.**

### External

Police Department	911
Rescue Squad	911
Fire Department	911 (Direct to specific entrance)
Parents	By Phone whenever possible; mass direction via radio to a neutral location. Efforts by Taconic Hills Security Officials to keep parents from removing students is paramount
News Media	Superintendent of Schools or designee:  1. Will be the media spokesperson for the district. Faculty and staff will refer all questions from the media to the superintendent or designee. 2. Media will only have access to school grounds with the approval of the

	<p>superintendent or designee. On school grounds media personnel will not interview students without parental permission. Such an interview must be conducted at the discretion of, and in the presence of, an administrator.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. No personal or academic information about a student is to be given to media personnel without full knowledge and prior approval from the student's parent or guardian, and from the student (if the student is 16 years of age or older).</li> <li>4. As part of the information disseminated to students, students will be advised of how the district plans to respond to media personnel. Additionally, students will be informed of their right not to speak to the media.</li> <li>5. Appendix 15 of the building-level safety plan can be used in preparing press statements.</li> </ol>
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- The Superintendent of Schools shall be responsible for conveying emergency information to educational facilities within the Taconic Hills Central School District. The Superintendent shall take appropriate steps to secure the following information about each educational agency within the district: number of students, number of staff, transportation requirements associated with the evacuation of each facility; and the business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each agency. Such information shall be updated at least annually by the Superintendent . Each such agency shall report material changes to such data to the Superintendent of Schools, in writing, within 7 days of such change.

**Non-Public Schools**

Hawthorne Valley School

Transportation: Provided by Taconic Hills CSD, Ichabod Crane CSD, Chatham CSD, Hudson CSD, private transportation companies, leased vehicle, vans, parent carpools.

School Officials: Business Administrator  
 (Work #) 672-7092  
 Director of Facilities  
 (Work #) 672-7092  
 Faculty Chair  
 (Work #) 672-7092

- Information will be provided to parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal through the use of telephone by staff at the building level using the student/parent directory and/or local and regional radio and TV stations. These are the same stations that are used to announce official school delays or closings as below. This information is provided to parents through the School District Calendar.

WCTW (The Cat)	98.5 FM
WDST	100.1 FM and 96.9 FM
WFLY	92.3 FM
WGY	810 AM
WHUC	1230 AM
WKZE	1020 AM / 98.1 FM
WNYT	Channel 13 TV
WQQQ	103.3 FM
WRGB	Channel 6 TV / 87.7 FM
WRNN	Channel 62 TV
WRVE	99.5 FM
WSBS	860 AM
WTEN	Channel 10 TV
WYJB	95.5 FM
WXXA	Channel 23 TV
WZCR	93.5 FM
Times Union	
Capital 9 News	

Additionally, if an event occurs at the school district where students cannot be released immediately, a parent/community public information center may be established at an alternative site which would be announced through the media.

In the event that this public information center is established, parents and community members are encouraged not to report to the school district where a building may be in crisis, but rather gather at the site where regular public information statements will be made by the Superintendent or designee.

## **B. Situational Responses – Multi-Hazard Response and Response Protocols**

Staff cooperation is critical when an act of violence occurs. In the event of a criminal act, bomb threat, civil disturbance, intrusion, hostage-taking, kidnapping or other threatening event, staff response may include:

1. Verbal instructions to cease the behavior.
2. Call for assistance from other staff.
3. Verbal instructions to follow classroom emergency procedures as announced by the main office over the public address system.
4. Call law enforcement and other necessary emergency response agencies.
5. Removal of any onlookers that could aggravate the situation.
6. Not invading the space of the individual(s) involved.
7. Removal of any potentially dangerous weapons or objects.
8. Physical restraint if other actions do not stop the violence.

Procedures are in place, but are not limited to, for the following emergency responses:

1. Lockdown
2. Shelter-in-Place
3. Hold-in-Place
4. Lockout
5. Evacuation

In the event of a violent incident, the following policies and procedures are to be followed at the district level:

- The Superintendent will ensure the building-level team has adequate resources to respond to the emergency.
- The Superintendent will develop a public information strategy to communicate necessary information to the media, parents and staff.
- The District Office will notify the leader of the district's Crisis Intervention Team of the event.
- The Superintendent will notify appropriate Board of Education members of the incident.
- The Superintendent will notify the BOCES District Superintendent that the school's emergency plan has been activated and file any necessary information with the State Education Department (for example, school bomb threat data cards).

In the event of a violent incident, the following policies and procedures are to be followed at the school building level:

- Student reports an incident to an adult or adult observes an incident.
- Adult takes appropriate action as necessary to respond to the incident.
- A written referral is forwarded to the building principal.
- School guidance counselor, social worker and nurse are involved when necessary.
- Building principal will conference with the student(s) involved to determine the problems/issues.
- If parental notification is necessary, building principal will contact the parent(s) and may arrange a parent conference.
- Appropriate discipline will be administered following the District Code of Conduct and incident reported to the State Education Department when appropriate.

Follow-up of the violent incident should include:

1. Investigation of the incident by building principal and law enforcement, as necessary
2. Preparation of written accounts of the incident by all involved
3. Review of written accounts by the building principal for any disparities
4. Appropriate disciplinary action according to the code of conduct
5. Review of the entire incident by administration for future planning
  - a. What happened?
  - b. Where did it happen?
  - c. When did it happen?
  - d. Why did it happen?
  - e. How did it happen?
  - f. How many individuals were involved?
  - g. Are the individuals associated with a group?
  - h. How could the incident have been prevented?
  - i. What warning signs were missed?
  - j. What can we do to prevent a future incident?
6. Counseling or other needed support for the victim(s), other students and staff involved in the incident.
7. Necessary reporting and parental notification.

Each school's building-level plan lists building specific response actions to criminal acts, bomb threats, civil disturbance, intrusion, hostage-taking, kidnapping, as well as technological and natural disasters.

### **Response Protocols**

The Taconic Hills Central School District has a comprehensive multi-hazard Emergency Response Plan. Such plan is updated annually. Copies of the plan are available in each Principal's Office as well as in the Superintendent's Office and the Business Office. Elements of the plan include:

- Chain of Command
- Other Relevant Parties
- Emergency Planning Committee
- Emergency Telephone Numbers
- Telephone Tree
- First Aid List
- Fleet List
- A list of hazardous incidents and a response plan for each (e.g. bomb threat, hostage, intruder, natural disaster, structural failure, et. al.)

### **Chain of Command**

Superintendent of Schools  
Director of Instruction and Staff Development  
Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds  
Supervisor of Transportation  
Jr./Sr. High School Principal  
Elementary Principal

### **Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government**

The School's Administration shall use the following process in making arrangements for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency services organizations and local government agencies:

- Superintendent/Designee in an emergency contacts dispatch point or 911 center for fire or EMS response.
- Superintendent/Designee contacts highest-ranking local government official for notification and/or assistance.

### **Procedures for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials**

The School's Administration shall use the following protocol for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law:

- Superintendent/Designee in an emergency will contact emergency management coordinator and/or the highest-ranking local government official for obtaining advice and assistance.
- The district has identified resources for an emergency from the following agencies: (examples include the Red Cross, fire department, police, private industry, private individuals, religious organizations and others).

### **District Resources Available for Use in an Emergency**

The Taconic Hills Central School District has created a comprehensive list of resources available during an emergency including fuel sources, communications, food service capability, school bus and maintenance vehicle lists, and medical supplies and AED, CPR and First Aid trained staff. Specific information in each of these categories is contained in the building-level plans.

### **Procedures to Coordinate the Use of School District Resources and Manpower during Emergencies**

The district shall use the following procedure to coordinate the use of school district resources and manpower during emergencies:

- The Building Principal of the affected facility shall contact the Superintendent or the District-Wide Safety Team and request the necessary manpower or resources.
- The Superintendent of Schools, or the highest-ranking person in the chain of command shall assess the request and allocate personnel and resources as necessary.

### **Protective Action Options**

The Taconic Hills Central School District shall follow the following protocols in assessing the appropriate protective action option. The decision to cancel school, to dismiss early, shelter in place or evacuate shall be made in cooperation with state and local emergency responders as appropriate.

- School cancellation
  - Monitor any situation that may warrant a school cancellation – *Superintendent/District Team.*
  - Make determination – *Superintendent.*
  - Contact local media (see list above).
- School delay
  - Monitor any situation that may warrant school delay – *Building Administrators/Superintendent/District Team.*
  - If conditions warrant, delay opening of school.
  - Contact Transportation Supervisor to coordinate transportation issues.
  - Contact local media to inform parents of delayed opening (see list above).
  - Set up information center so that parents may make inquiries as to situation.
  - Provide for safety and security of staff members and students who do come to school.
- Early dismissal
  - Monitor situation – *Superintendent/District Team.*
  - If conditions warrant, close school – *Superintendent.*
  - Contact Transportation Supervisor to arrange transportation.
  - Contact local media to inform parents of early dismissal (see list above).
  - Set up an information center so that parents may make inquiries as to the situation.
  - Retain appropriate district personnel until all students have been returned home.
- Evacuation (before, during and after school hours, including security during evacuation and evacuation routes)
  - Determine the level of threat – *Superintendent.*

- Contact Transportation Supervisor to arrange transportation – *Superintendent or Designee*.
  - Clear all evacuation routes and sites prior to evacuation.
  - Evacuate all staff and students to pre-arranged evacuation sites.
  - Account for all student and staff population. Report any missing staff or students to Building Principal.
  - Make determination regarding early dismissal – *Superintendent or Designee*.
  - If determination was made to dismiss early, contact local media to inform parents of early dismissal (see list above).
  - Ensure adult supervision or continued school supervision/security.
  - Set up an information center so that parents may make inquiries as to the situation.
  - Retain appropriate district personnel until all students have been returned home.
- Sheltering sites (internal and external)
    - Determine the level of threat – *Superintendent/Incident Commander /Designee*.
    - Determine location of sheltering depending on nature of incident.
    - Account for all students and staff. Report any missing staff or students to designee.
    - Determine other occupants in the building.
    - Make appropriate arrangements for human needs.
    - Take appropriate safety precautions.
    - Establish a public information officer to provide information and current status of the situation to parents and other inquiring parties.
    - Retain appropriate district personnel until all students have been returned home.

## RECOVERY

### A. District Support for Buildings

The Taconic Hills Central School District District-Wide Team will support the Building-level Emergency Response Team and the Post-Incident Response Teams in affected schools. The Superintendent in consultation with the team may choose to activate Questar III District-Wide Crisis Intervention Team by contacting the Questar III District Superintendent at 518-477-8771. See Appendix 5.

Additionally, a School Emergency Resource Team has been formed and may be activated by contacting Questar III BOCES District Superintendent at 518-477-8771 (w). Questar III BOCES team members include:

- Assistant Superintendent
- Director of Health and Safety
- Director of Communications
- School Attorney

This team will assist with crisis management; advice and implement necessary follow-up, assist with media relations, technical support and minimize loss of the educational program.

### B. Disaster Mental Health Services

The district office shall assist in the coordination of Disaster Mental Health Resources, in support of the Post-Incident Response Teams in the affected schools. The Superintendent or

his/her designee may activate the Questar III Crisis Intervention Team or gain additional resources from the Columbia County Department of Mental Health, as the situation requires.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1:**

Listing of all school buildings covered by the District-Wide School Safety Plan with addresses of buildings, and contact names and telephone numbers for building staff.

### **Appendix 2:**

Summary of Building-level plan.

### **Appendix 3:**

Copy of the Taconic Hills Central School District Code-of-Conduct.

### **Appendix 4:**

The Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors – A Guide for Families and Communities

## **Appendix 1**

### **Listing of all school buildings covered by the District.**

#### **Taconic Hills Central School District Office**

73 County Route 11A  
Craryville, NY 12521

Telephone: 518-325-2890  
Superintendent

#### **Taconic Hills High School**

73 County Route 11A  
Craryville, NY 12521

Telephone: 518-325-2840  
Principal

#### **Taconic Hills Middle School**

73 County Route 11A  
Craryville, NY 12521

Telephone: 518-325-2830  
Principal

#### **Taconic Hills Elementary School**

73 County Route 11A  
Craryville, NY 12521

Telephone: 518-325-2820  
Principal

#### **Bus Garage**

73 County Route 11A  
Craryville, NY 12521

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## Appendix 2

### Taconic Hills Central School District Building-Level Emergency Response Plan Summary

#### Commissioner's Regulation § 155.17

#### INTRODUCTION

Emergencies in schools must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. Schools are at risk of acts of violence, natural, and manmade disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in schools.

The Taconic Hills Central School District supports the SAVE Legislation and intends to facilitate the planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

#### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

##### A. Purpose

The Taconic Hills Central School District's Building-level Emergency Response Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation § 155.17. At the direction of the Taconic Hills Central School District Board of Education, the Principals of the Taconic Hills Central School District schools appointed a Building-level School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the School Emergency Response Plan.

##### B. Identification of School Teams

Each building has developed three emergency teams:

- Building-level School Safety Team
- Building-level School Emergency Response Team
- Building-level Post-Incident Response Team

##### C. Concept of Operations

- The initial response to all emergencies will be by the School Emergency Response Team.
- Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified.
- Efforts may be supplemented by county and state resources through existing protocols.

##### D. Plan review and public comment

- This plan will be reviewed periodically during the year and will be maintained by the Building-level School Safety Team. The required annual review will be completed on or before July 1 of each year after its adoption by the Board of Education.
- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation § 155.17 (e)(3), a summary of this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. The School Board may adopt the district-wide and building-level plans only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plans must be formally adopted by the Board of Education.
- Building-level Emergency Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law Section § 2801-a.
- Full copies of the Building-level Emergency Response Plan will be supplied to both local and State Police within 30 days of adoption.

## **PLAN SUMMARY**

### **RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

#### **A. Designation of School Teams**

- A Building-level School Safety Team, including the members required by regulation, has been created. Members of the team include: school safety personnel; local law enforcement officials; representatives of teacher, administrator, and parent organizations; local ambulance and other emergency response agencies; community members; other school personnel; and other representatives appointed by the Board of Education.
- A Building-level Emergency Response Team, including the members required by regulation, has been created. Members of the team include: school personnel, local law enforcement officials, representatives from local, regional, and/or State emergency response agencies; and other appropriate incident response teams.
- A Building-level Post-incident Response Team, including the members required by regulation, has been created. Members of the team include: school personnel; medical personnel; mental health counselors; and others who can assist the school community in coping with the aftermath of a serious violent incident or emergency.

#### **B. Prevention/Intervention Strategies**

- Training for emergency teams and individuals who have safety responsibility, including de-escalation training, has been conducted as determined in the district-wide plan.
- Procedures for an annual review and the conduct of drills and exercises to test components of this school's plan, including the use of tabletop exercises, in coordination with local and county emergency responders and preparedness officials have been developed and will be implemented.

- The District-Wide School Safety Plan requires annual multi-hazard training for students and staff. The school's plan describes how this training will be provided to staff and students in the building.

### **C. Identification of Sites of Potential Emergencies**

The District-Wide School Safety Plan requires an identification of sites of potential emergency. The Building-level School Safety Team has identified both internal and external hazards that may warrant protective actions, such as the evacuation and sheltering of the school population.

## **RESPONSE**

### **A. Assignment of Responsibilities**

A chain of command consistent with the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS) will be used in response to an emergency in the building. In the event of an emergency, the building's response team may adapt NIIMS/ICS principles based on the needs of the incident.

### **B. Continuity of Operations**

The building has developed procedures to continue operations during an emergency.

### **C. Access to Floor Plans**

Procedures have been developed to ensure that crisis response, fire and law enforcement agencies have access to floor plans, blueprints, schematics or other maps of the school's interior, school grounds and road maps of the immediate surrounding area.

### **D. Notification and Activation**

Procedures have been developed to ensure that crisis response, fire, and law enforcement agencies have access to floor plans, blueprints, schematics or other maps of the school's interior, school grounds and road maps of the immediate surrounding area.

Internal and external communication systems have been developed that will be used in emergencies.

Procedures are in place for notification and activation of the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.

### **E. Hazard Guidelines**

The District-Wide School Safety Plan includes multi-hazard response plans for taking actions in response to an emergency. The school building's plan includes building-specific guidelines for the following types of emergencies: Threats of Violence, Intruder, Hostage/Kidnapping, Explosive/Bomb Threat, Natural/Weather Related, Hazardous Material, Civil Disturbance, Biological, School Bus Accident, Radiological, Gas Leak, Epidemic, or Others as determined by the Building-level School Safety Team

### **F. Evacuation Procedures**

Policies and procedures have been developed for the safe evacuation of students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school in the event of a serious violent incident which include at least the following:

- Evacuation before, during and after school hours (including security during evacuation)
- Evacuation routes (internal & external)
- Sheltering sites (internal & external)
- Procedures for addressing medical needs
- Transportation
- Emergency notification of persons in parental relation to the students
- Other procedures as determined by the Building-level School Safety Team.

### **G. Security of Crime Scene**

Policies and procedures have been established for securing and restricting access to the crime scene in order to preserve evidence from being disturbed or destroyed in cases of violent crimes on school property.

### **RECOVERY**

The Building-level Emergency Response Plan will be coordinated with the statewide plan for disaster mental health services to assure that the school has access to federal, state and local mental health resources in the event of a violent incident.

Short-term actions for recovery include:

- Mental health counseling (students and staff)
- Building security
- Facility restoration
- Post-incident response critique
- Other

Long-term actions for recovery include:

- Mental health counseling (monitor for post-traumatic stress behavior)
- Building security
- Mitigation (to reduce the likelihood of occurrence and impact if it does occur again)
- Other

## Appendix 3

### Code of Conduct

The Taconic Hills Central School District Code of Conduct can be found at the following link:

[Taconic Hills Central School District Code of Conduct](#)

## Appendix 4

### The Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors – A Guide for Families and Communities

#### Early Warning Signs

It is not always possible to predict behavior that will lead to violence. In some situations and for some youth, different combinations of events, behaviors, and emotions may lead to aggressive rage or violent behavior toward self or others. School personnel and students as well as parents are often in a good position to observe these early warning signs.

None of these signs alone is sufficient for predicting aggression and violence. Moreover, it is inappropriate--and potentially harmful--to use the early warning signs as a checklist against which to match individual children. Rather, the warning signs are offered only as an aid in identifying and referring children who may need help. A good rule of thumb is to assume that these warning signs, especially when they are presented in combination, indicate a need for further analysis to determine an appropriate intervention.

The information that follows and such other information as may be appropriate concerning Early Warning shall be made available to all staff in a form to be determined by the Superintendent. It is the policy of the Taconic Hills Central School District that staff and students use the early warning signs only for identification and referral purposes. Trained professionals should make diagnoses in consultation with the child's parents or guardian.

The following early warning signs are cited by the United States Department of Education in its publication entitled **Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools** and are presented with the following qualifications: they are not equally significant and they are not presented in order of seriousness. They include:

- Social withdrawal. In some situations, gradual and eventually complete withdrawal from social contacts can be an important indicator of a troubled child. The withdrawal often stems from feelings of depression, rejection, persecution, unworthiness, and lack of confidence.
- Excessive feelings of isolation and being alone. Research has shown that the majority of children who are isolated and appear to be friendless are not violent. In fact, these feelings are sometimes characteristic of children and youth who may be troubled, withdrawn, or have internal issues that hinder development of social affiliations. However, research also has shown that in some cases feelings of isolation and not having friends are associated with children who behave aggressively and violently.
- Excessive feelings of rejection. In the process of growing up, and in the course of adolescent development, many young people experience emotionally painful rejection. Children who are troubled often are isolated from their mentally healthy peers. Their responses to rejection will depend on many background factors. Without support, they may be at risk of expressing their emotional distress in negative ways-including violence. Some aggressive children who are rejected by non-aggressive peers seek out aggressive friends who, in turn, reinforce their violent tendencies.
- Being a victim of violence. Children who are victims of violence-including physical or sexual abuse-in the community, at school, or at home are sometimes at risk themselves of becoming violent toward themselves or others.

- Feelings of being picked on and persecuted. The youth who feels constantly picked on, teased, bullied, singled out for ridicule, and humiliated at home or at school may initially withdraw socially. If not given adequate support in addressing these feelings, some children may vent them in inappropriate ways—including possible aggression or violence.
- Low school interest and poor academic performance. Poor school achievement can be the result of many factors. It is important to consider whether there is a drastic change in performance and/or poor performance becomes a chronic condition that limits the child's capacity to learn. In some situations--such as when the low achiever feels frustrated, unworthy, chastised, and denigrated--acting out and aggressive behaviors may occur. It is important to assess the emotional and cognitive reasons for the academic performance change to determine the true nature of the problem.
- Expression of violence in writings and drawings. Children and youth often express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and intentions in their drawings and in stories, poetry, and other written expressive forms. Many children produce work about violent themes that for the most part is harmless when taken in context. However, an overrepresentation of violence in writings and drawings that is directed at specific individuals (family members, peers, other adults) consistently over time, may signal emotional problems and the potential for violence. Because there is a real danger in misdiagnosing such a sign, it is important to seek the guidance of a qualified professional--such as a school psychologist, counselor, or other mental health specialist--to determine its meaning.
- Uncontrolled anger. Everyone gets angry; anger is a natural emotion. However, anger that is expressed frequently and intensely in response to minor irritants may signal potential violent behavior toward self or others.
- Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behaviors. Children often engage in acts of shoving and mild aggression. However, some mildly aggressive behaviors such as constant hitting and bullying of others that occur early in children's lives, if left unattended, might later escalate into more serious behaviors.
- History of discipline problems. Chronic behavior and disciplinary problems both in school and at home may suggest that underlying emotional needs are not being met. These unmet needs may be manifested in acting out and aggressive behaviors. These problems may set the stage for the child to violate norms and rules, defy authority, disengage from school, and engage in aggressive behaviors with other children and adults.
- Past history of violent and aggressive behavior. Unless provided with support and counseling, a youth who has a history of aggressive or violent behavior is likely to repeat those behaviors. Aggressive and violent acts may be directed toward other individuals, be expressed in cruelty to animals, or include fire setting. Youth who show an early pattern of antisocial behavior frequently and across multiple settings are particularly at risk for future aggressive and antisocial behavior. Similarly, youth who engage in overt behaviors such as bullying, generalized aggression and defiance, and covert behaviors such as stealing, vandalism, lying, cheating, and fire setting also are at risk for more serious aggressive behavior. Research suggests that age of onset may be a key factor in interpreting early warning signs. For example, children who engage in aggression and drug abuse at an early age (before age 12) are more likely to show violence later on

than are children who begin such behavior at an older age. In the presence of such signs it is important to review the child's history with behavioral experts and seek parents' observations and insights.

- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes. All children have likes and dislikes. However, an intense prejudice toward others based on racial, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and physical appearance--when coupled with other factors--may lead to violent assaults against those who are perceived to be different. Membership in hate groups or the willingness to victimize individuals with disabilities or health problems also should be treated as early warning signs.
- Drug use and alcohol use. Apart from being unhealthy behaviors, drug use and alcohol use reduces self-control and exposes children and youth to violence, either as perpetrators, as victims, or both.
- Affiliation with gangs. Gangs that support anti-social values and behaviors--including extortion, intimidation, and acts of violence toward other students--cause fear and stress among other students. Youth who are influenced by these groups--those who emulate and copy their behavior, as well as those who become affiliated with them--may adopt these values and act in violent or aggressive ways in certain situations. Gang-related violence and turf battles are common occurrences tied to the use of drugs that often result in injury and/or death.
- Inappropriate access to, possession and use of firearms. Children and youth who inappropriately possess or have access to firearms can have an increased risk for violence. Research shows that such youngsters also have a higher probability of becoming victims. Families can reduce inappropriate access and use by restricting, monitoring, and supervising children's access to firearms and other weapons. Children who have a history of aggression, impulsiveness, or other emotional problems should not have access to firearms and other weapons.
- Serious threats of violence. Idle threats are a common response to frustration. Alternatively, one of the most reliable indicators that a youth is likely to commit a dangerous act toward self or others is a detailed and specific threat to use violence. Recent incidents across the country clearly indicate that threats to commit violence against oneself or others should be taken very seriously. Steps must be taken to understand the nature of these threats and to prevent them from being carried out.

### **Identifying and Responding to Imminent Warning Signs**

Unlike early warning signs, imminent warning signs indicate that a student is very close to behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous to self and/or to others. Imminent warning signs require an immediate response.

No single warning sign can predict that a dangerous act will occur. Rather, imminent warning signs usually are presented as a sequence of overt, serious, hostile behaviors or threats directed at peers, staff, or other individuals. Usually, imminent warning signs are evident to more than one staff member--as well as to the child's family.

Imminent warning signs may include:

- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members.
- Severe destruction of property.

- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons.
- Detailed threats of lethal violence.
- Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons.
- Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide.

## **Threat Assessment**

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. A threat can be written, spoken, or symbolic – as in motioning with one’s hands as though shooting or strangling another person. There are principally four types of threats – direct, indirect, veiled and conditional.

Threats are made for a variety of reasons: as a warning signal, a reaction to fear of punishment, anxiety, demand for attention or as retribution for a perceived or actual slight or affront. Threats may be intended to taunt, intimidate, assert power, punish, manipulate, coerce, frighten, terrorize, compel desired behavior, to strike back for an injury, injustice or slight; to be disruptive, to challenge authority or to protect oneself.

Individuals who make threats normally manifest other behaviors or emotions that are indicative of a problem. These can include: signs of depression, prolonged brooding, evidence of frustration or disappointment; fantasies of destruction or revenge in conversations, writings, drawings or other actions; expressions of intense love, fear, rage, revenge, excitement or pronounced desire for recognition. Use of alcohol or drugs can be an aggravating factor, as can a romantic breakup, failing grades or conflicts with parents or friends.

## **Personality Traits**

Personality traits and behaviors that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- a student intentionally or unintentionally revealing clues to feelings, thoughts, fantasies, attitudes, or intentions that may signal an impending violent act;
- low tolerance of frustration, easily hurt, insulted, angered by real or perceived injustices;
- poor coping skills, demonstrating little ability to deal with frustration, criticism, disappointment, failure, rejection or humiliation;
- lack of resiliency, is unable to bounce back from frustrating and disappointing experiences; failed love relationship, cannot accept or comes to term with humiliation or rejection;
- injustice collector, nurses resentment over real or perceived injustices, will not forgive or forget those who s/he believes are responsible;
- depression manifested by lethargy, physical fatigue, morose or dark outlook on life, malaise, lack of interest in activities once enjoyed, unpredictable anger, generalized or excessive hatred to others, hopelessness about the future, psychomotor agitation, restlessness, inattention, sleep and eating disorders;
- narcissism, self-centered, lacking insight to the needs / feelings of others, blames others for failure and disappointment, may embrace the role of victim, display signs of paranoia, self-importance or grandiosity masking feelings of unworthiness, notably think or thin skinned;
- alienation, feels different or estranged from others, more than being a loner, involves feelings of isolation, sadness, loneliness, not belonging or fitting in;
- dehumanizes others, fails to see others as humans, sees them as objects to be thwarted;
- lacks empathy, demonstrates inability to understand feelings of others, may ridicule displays of emotion as weak or stupid;

- exaggerated sense of entitlement, has a sense of being superior and constantly expects special treatment and consideration;
- attitude of superiority, has a sense of being superior to others, smarter, more creative, talented, experienced, more worldly;
- exaggerated / pathological need for attention, positive or negative, regardless of the circumstances;
- externalizes blame, consistently refuses to take responsibility for own actions, blames others, often seems impervious to rational argument and common sense;
- masks low self-esteem, may display arrogance, self-glorifying attitude, avoids high visibility or involvement, may be considered a “non-entity” by peers:
- anger management problems, manifested by consistent temper tantrums, melodramatic displays, brooding, sulking, seething silence, reacts out of proportion to cause, may direct anger to those who have no connection to triggering incident;
- intolerance, racial, ethnic, religious and other, displays symbols and slogans of intolerance on self or possessions;
- inappropriate humor, macabre, insulting, belittling, or mean.
- Attempts to manipulate others, attempts to con and manipulate to win trust so others will rationalize aberrant behavior;
- Lack of trust, is untrusting and suspicious of the motives and intentions of others, may approach clinically paranoid state;
- Closed social group, introverted, with acquaintances rather than friends, may associate only with a single small group to the exclusion of others;
- Manifests a dramatic change in behavior, academic performance, disobedience of school rules, schedules, dress codes etc.
- Rigid and opinionated, judgemental and cynical, strong opinions on topics about which little knowledge is possessed, disregards facts, logic and reasoning;
- Demonstrates unusual interest in sensational violence;
- Fascination with violence-filled entertainment, movies, TV, computer games, music videos, printed material, inordinate amount of time with violent computer games and websites involving violence weapons and disturbing objects;
- Has negative role models, drawn to negative, inappropriate role models, Hitler, Satan or others associated with violence and destruction;
- Manifests behavior that is relevant to carrying out a threat, spends inordinate amount of time practicing with firearms, on violent websites, begins excluding normal pursuits such as homework, class, work, time with friends.

### **Family Dynamics**

Family dynamics that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- Turbulent parent / child relationship, relationship is particularly difficult, can be uniquely evident following recent or multiple moves, loss of parent, addition of step-parent, dismisses parents role in his / her life, evidence of violence in the home;
- Acceptance of pathological behavior, parents do not react to behavior that most would find disturbing’ parents appear unable to recognize or acknowledge problems in their children, respond quite defensively to real or perceived criticism of child, parents appear unconcerned about, minimize or reject reports of inappropriate behavior by child;
- Access to weapons, family keeps guns, weapons, explosives materials in the home and accessible to the children, weapons treated carelessly, without normal safety precautions, parent or role model may handle weapons irresponsibly or use as device for intimidation;
- Lack of family intimacy or closeness;

- Student “rules the roost,” few limits set for children, parents regularly submit to child’s demands, student insists on inordinate degree of privacy, parents have little information about student activities, school life, friends, or other relationships.
- No limits or monitoring of TV or Internet, parents do not supervise, limit or monitor TV, Internet, computer use or access.

### **School Dynamics**

School dynamics that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- Student attachment to school, student appears detached from school, other students, teachers, and school activities;
- Tolerance for disrespectful behavior, school does little to prevent or punish disrespectful behavior between students, bullying is part of the school culture, school authorities are oblivious to bullying, little or no intervention by school authorities, school atmosphere promotes racial or class divisions, allows them to remain unchallenged;
- Inequitable discipline, discipline is inequitably applied or is perceived as such by students or staff;
- Inflexible culture, official and unofficial patterns of behavior, values and relationships among students, teachers and administrators are static, unyielding and insensitive to changes in society and the changing needs of newer students;
- Pecking order among students, certain groups have more prestige and respect – both officially and unofficially by students and school officials;
- Code of silence, prevails among students, little trust between students and staff;
- Unsupervised computer access, access is unsupervised and unmonitored, students are able to play violent games, explore inappropriate websites, promote violent hate groups, give instruction in bomb making etc.

### **Social Dynamics**

Social dynamics that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- Media, entertainment and technology, easy unmonitored access to media, entertainment and Internet sites with violent themes and images;
- Peer groups, intense and extensive involvement with a group that shares fascination with violence or extremist beliefs;
- Drugs and alcohol, knowledge of student’s use of drugs or alcohol or changes in such use is important;
- Outside interests, outside interests of students are important to note as they can mitigate or increase the school’s level of concern in assessing a threat;
- Copycat effect, school shooting and other violent incidents that receive intense media attention can generate threats or copycat violence elsewhere, school staff should be highly vigilant in the aftermath of such incidents.